

superior fifth race—the “Cosmic Race.” In particular, Vasconcelos contrasted the positive impact of miscegenation in Mexico with the negative results of racial exclusivity in the United States. Similarly, Brazilian sociologist and politician Gilberto Freyre wrote extensively on the benefits of racial mixing in Brazilian history and identity, and he is to this day identified as the “Father of *Racial Democracy* Theory.” Freyre argued that one major result of racial intermixing in Brazil was that non-whites faced no legal barriers to advancement; therefore, true democracy existed among the different races in the nation. Like other early twentieth-century nationalists, Freyre drew a distinction between Brazilian racial harmony with the racial discord he had observed in the United States.

Though they came from different backgrounds and made different kinds of arguments, all of these men contributed to a new sense of pride in Latin American identity and cultural diversity. In some cases, as with Martí and Vasconcelos, intellectual nationalists sought to reach an audience that included men of different racial backgrounds. Freyre, however, wrote for exclusively elite audiences. Many of these men developed their ideas by living for a period in the United States, where they witnessed firsthand the bad as well as good features of this emerging world power. Perhaps ironically, these ideas of *racial democracy* often reinforced rather than weakened racial inequalities. Although intellectuals used their theories of *racial democracy* and racial harmony to assert that Afro-Latin Americans or indigenous peoples faced no obstacles to socio-political mobility, racism persisted in social and government practices. Though there were few overt segregation laws such as those found in the United States before the Civil Rights movement, Latin American racism was subtle but widespread. If, for example, Afro-Cubans or Afro-Brazilians tried to address racial inequalities, government officials (often white elites) accused them of acting in a racist manner by trying to create racial divides where none had previously existed!

Despite their considerable limitations, Latin American notions of *racial democracy* were more

inclusive than racial theories in the United States and Europe at the time, and they offered Afro-Latin Americans some opportunities for participation in their nations. Moreover, although elites manipulated *racial democracy* theories to buttress existing racial hierarchies, the ideas also kept them from being able to pass overtly racist policies or laws. Finally, Afro-Latin Americans employed these new ideologies to advance their own interests, such as when they created multiracial labor organizations.² In short, *racial democracy* theories defy simplistic generalization, and their impact on Latin American societies was both considerable and complex.

Questions to Consider:

1. Why do you think Martí's assertions about race won over Afro-Cuban support the Cuban independence movement? What might Afro-Cubans have expected from independence based on Martí's writings?
2. What parts of Martí's writings might have concerned Euro-Cuban elites the most? What might have appealed to them the most?
3. Assess the various claims and statements that Martí made about race in these documents. Was he asserting racial equality? Why or why not?
4. What was the role of *manliness* in these writings? What does that tell us about the relationship between gender and nationalism in Cuba?
5. How do the views of race presented in this chapter compare with ideas presented in other chapters in this section? What do your conclusions tell you about how and why Latin American national identities and race relations were changing by the early twentieth century?

²See, for example, Alejandro de la Fuente, “Myths of Racial Democracy: Cuba, 1900–1912,” *Latin American Research Review* 34, no. 3 (1999): 39–73.

José Martí on Race and Nation

“Our America”³

The prideful villager thinks his hometown contains the whole world, and as long as he can stay on as mayor or humiliate the rival who stole his sweetheart or watch his nest egg accumulating in its strongbox he believes the universe to be in good order, unaware of the giants in seven-league boots who can crush him underfoot or the battling comets in the heavens that go through the air devouring the sleeping worlds. Whatever is left of that sleepy hometown in America must awaken. These are not times for going to bed in a sleeping cap, but rather, like Juan de Castellanos's⁴ men, with our weapons for a pillow, weapons of the mind, which vanquish all others. Trenches of ideas are worth more than trenches of stone.

A cloud of ideas is a thing no armored prow can smash through. A vital idea set ablaze before the world at the right moment can, like the mystic banner of the last judgment, stop a fleet of battleships. Hometowns that are still strangers to one another must hurry to become acquainted, like men who are about to do battle together. Those who shake their fists at each other like jealous brothers quarreling over a piece of land or the owner of a small house who envies the man with a better one must join hands and interlace them until their two hands are as one. Those who, shielded by a criminal tradition, mutilate, with swords smeared in the same blood that flows through their own veins, the land of a conquered brother whose punishment far exceeds his crimes, must return that land to their brother if they do not wish to be known as a nation of plunderers. The honorable man does not collect his debts of honor in money, at so much per slap. We can no longer be a nation of fluttering leaves, spending our lives in the air, our treetop crowned in flowers, humming or creaking, caressed by the caprices of sunlight or thrashed and felled by tempests. The trees must form ranks to block the seven-league giant! It is the

hour of reckoning and of marching in unison, and we must move in lines as compact as the veins of silver that lie at the roots of the Andes.

Only runts whose growth was stunted will lack the necessary valor, for those who have no faith in their land are like men born prematurely. Having no valor themselves, they deny that other men do. Their puny arms, with bracelets and painted nails, the arms of Madrid or of Paris, cannot manage the lofty tree and so they say the tree cannot be climbed. We must load up the ships with these termites who gnaw away at the core of the *patria* that has nurtured them; if they are Parisians or Madrileños then let them stroll to the Prado by lamplight or go to Tortoni's for an ice. These sons of carpenters who are ashamed that their father was a carpenter! These men born in America who are ashamed of the mother that raised them because she wears an Indian apron, these delinquents who disown their sick mother and leave her alone in her sickbed! Which one is truly a man, he who stays with his mother to nurse her through her illness, or he who forces her to work somewhere out of sight, and lives off her sustenance in corrupted lands, with a worm for his insignia, cursing the bosom that bore him, sporting a sign that says “traitor” on the back of his paper dress-coat? These sons of our America, which must save herself through her Indians, and which is going from less to more, who desert her and take up arms in the armies of North America, which drowns its own Indians in blood and is going from more to less! These delicate creatures who are men but do not want to do men's work! Did Washington, who made that land for them, go and live with the English during the years when he saw the English marching against his own land? These *incroyables* who drag their honor across foreign soil, like the *incroyables* of the French Revolution, dancing, smacking their lips, and deliberately slurring their words!

And in what *patria* can a man take greater pride than in our long-suffering republics of America, erected among mute masses of Indians upon the bloodied arms of no more than a hundred apostles, to the sound of the book doing battle against the monk's tall candle? Never before have such advanced

³Source: From José Martí: *Selected Writings*, introduction by Roberto Gonzalez Echevarria, edited by Esther Allen, translated by Esther Allen, copyright © 2002 by Esther Allen. Used by permission of Viking Penguin, a division of Penguin Group (USA) Inc.

⁴Castellanos was a sixteenth-century Spanish poet and chronicler of the conquest of New Granada (present-day Colombia).

and consolidated nations been created from such disparate factors in less historical time. The haughty man thinks that because he wields a quick pen or a vivid phrase the earth was made to be his pedestal, and accuses his native republic of irredeemable incompetence because its virgin jungles do not continually provide him with the means of going about the world a famous plutocrat, driving Persian ponies and spilling champagne. The incapacity lies not in the emerging country, which demands forms that are appropriate to it and a grandeur that is useful, but in the leaders who try to rule unique nations, of a singular and violent composition, with laws inherited from four centuries of free practice in the United States and nineteen centuries of monarchy in France. A gaucho's pony cannot be stopped in mid bolt by one of Alexander Hamilton's laws. The sluggish blood of the Indian race cannot be quickened by a phrase from Sieyès.⁵ To govern well, one must attend closely to the reality of the place that is governed. In America, the good ruler does not need to know how the German or Frenchman governed, but what elements his own country is composed of and how he can marshal them so as to reach, by means and institutions born from the country itself, the desirable state in which every man knows himself and is active, and all men enjoy the abundance that nature, for the good of all, has bestowed on the country they make fruitful by their labor and defend with their lives. The government must be born from the country. The spirit of government must be the spirit of the country. The form of the government must be in harmony with the country's natural constitution. The government is no more than an equilibrium among the country's natural elements.

In America the natural man has triumphed over the imported book. Natural men have triumphed over an artificial intelligentsia. The native *mestizo* has triumphed over the alien, pure-blooded *criollo*. The battle is not between civilization and barbarity⁶, but between false erudition and nature. The natural man

is good, and esteems and rewards a superior intelligence as long as that intelligence does not use his submission against him or offend him by ignoring him—for that the natural man deems unforgivable, and he is prepared to use force to regain the respect of anyone who wounds his sensibilities or harms his interests. The tyrants of America have come to power by acquiescing to these scorned natural elements and have fallen as soon as they betrayed them. The republics have purged the former tyrannies of their inability to know the true elements of the country, derive the form of government from them, and govern along with them. *Governor*, in a new country, means *Creator*.

In countries composed of educated and uneducated sectors, the uneducated will govern by their habit of attacking and resolving their doubts with their fists, unless the educated learn the art of governing. The uneducated masses are lazy and timid about matters of the intellect and want to be well-governed, but if the government injures them they shake it off and govern themselves. How can our governors emerge from the universities when there is not a university in America that teaches the most basic element of the art of governing, which is the analysis of all that is unique to the peoples of America? Our youth go out into the world wearing Yankee- or French-colored glasses and aspire to rule by guesswork in a country they do not know. Those unacquainted with the rudiments of politics should not be allowed to embark on a career in politics. The literary prizes must not go to the best ode, but to the best study of the political factors in the student's country. In the newspapers, lecture halls, and academies, the study of the country's real factors must be carried forward. Simply knowing those factors without blindfolds or circumlocutions is enough—for anyone who deliberately or unknowingly sets aside a part of the truth will ultimately fail because of the truth he was lacking, which expands when neglected and brings down whatever is built without it. Solving the problem after knowing its elements is easier than solving it without knowing them. The natural man, strong and indignant, comes and overthrows the authority that is accumulated from books because it is not administered in keeping with the manifest needs of the country. To know is to solve.

To know the country and govern it in accordance with that knowledge is the only way of freeing it from tyranny. The European university must yield to the American university. The history of America from the Incas to the present must be taught in its smallest detail, even if the Greek Archons go untaught. Our own Greece is preferable to the Greece that is not ours; we need it more. Statesmen who arise from the nation must replace statesmen who are alien to it. Let the world be grafted onto our republics, but we must be the trunk. And let the vanquished pedant hold his tongue, for there is no *patria* in which a man can take greater pride than in our long-suffering American republics.

Our feet upon a rosary, our heads white, and our bodies a motley of Indian and *criollo* we boldly entered the community of nations. Bering the standard of the Virgin, we went out to conquer our liberty. A priest, a few lieutenants, and a woman built a republic in Mexico upon the shoulders of the Indians.⁷ A Spanish cleric, under cover of his priestly cape, taught French liberty to a handful of magnificent students who chose a Spanish general to lead Central America against Spain. Still accustomed to monarchy, and with the sun on their chests, the Venezuelans in the north and the Argentines in the south set out to construct nations. When the two heroes clashed and the continent was about to be rocked, one of them, and not the lesser one, turned back.⁸ But heroism is less glorious in peacetime than in war, and thus rarer, and it is easier for a man to die with honor than to think in an orderly way. Exalted and unanimous sentiments are more readily governed than the diverging, arrogant, alien, and ambitious ideas that emerge when the battle is over. The powers that were swept up in the epic struggle, along with the feline wariness of the species and the sheer weight of reality, undermined the edifice that had raised the

flags of nations sustained by wise governance in the colonial practice of reason and freedom over the crude and singular regions of our *mestizo* America with its towns of bare legs and Parisian dress-coats. The colonial hierarchy resisted the republic's democracy, and the capital city, wearing its elegant cravat, left the countryside, in its horsehide boots, waiting at the door; the redeemers born from books did not understand that a revolution that had triumphed when the soul of the earth was unleashed by a savior's voice had to govern with the soul of the earth and not against it or without it. And for all these reasons, America began enduring and still endures the weary task of reconciling the discordant and hostile elements it inherited from its perverse, despotic colonizer with the imported forms and ideas that have, in their lack of local reality, delayed the advent of a logical form of government. The continent, deformed by three centuries of a rule that denied man the right to exercise his reason, embarked—overlooking or refusing to listen to the ignorant masses that had helped it redeem itself—upon a government based on reason, the reason of all directed toward the things that are of concern to all, and not the university-taught reason of the few imposed upon the rustic reason of others. The problem of independence was not the change in form, but the change in spirit.

Common cause had to be made with the oppressed in order to consolidate a system that was opposed to the interests and governmental habits of the oppressors. The tiger, frightened away by the flash of gunfire, creeps back in the night to find his prey. He will die with flames shooting from his eyes, his claws unsheathed, but now his step is inaudible for he comes on velvet paws. When the prey awakens, the tiger is upon him. The colony lives on in the republic, but our America is saving itself from its grave blunders—the arrogance of capital cities, the blind triumph of the scorned *campesinos*, the excessive importation of foreign ideas and formulas, the wicked and impolitic disdain for the native race—through the superior virtue, confirmed by necessary bloodshed, of the republic that struggles against the colony. The tiger waits behind every tree, crouches in every corner. He will die, his claws unsheathed, flames shooting from his eyes.

⁵This "priest" is a reference to Miguel Hidalgo y Costilla, the priest who led Mexico's first independence movement (see Chapter 1).

⁸This reference is to the meeting of Simón Bolívar and José de San Martín in Guayaquil (Ecuador) during the wars for South American independence. San Martín arrived from Argentina, Bolívar from Peru; both men claimed the right to liberate Peru from Spanish rule, but in the end San Martín left Peru to Bolívar.

⁵Sieyès was a leading figure in the French Revolution.

⁶Martí referred here to nineteenth-century notions about civilization and barbarism like those that Sarmiento espoused (see Chapter 5 of this Volume).

But “these countries will be saved,” in the words of Argentine Rivadavia,⁹ who erred on the side of urbanity during crude times; the machete is ill-suited to a silken scabbard, nor can the spear be abandoned in a country won by the spear, for it becomes enraged and stands in the doorway of Iturbide’s Congress¹⁰ demanding that “the fair-skinned man be made emperor.” These countries will be saved because, with the genius of moderation that now seems, by nature’s serene harmony, to prevail in the continent of light, and the influence of the critical reading that has, in Europe, replaced the fumbling ideas about phalansteries in which the previous generation was steeped, the real man is being born to America, in these real times.

What a vision we were [in the nineteenth century]: the chest of an athlete, the hands of a dandy, and the forehead of a child. We were a whole fancy dress ball, in English trousers, a Parisian waistcoat, a North American overcoat, and a Spanish bull-fighter’s cap. The Indian circled about us, mute, and went to the mountaintop to christen his children. The black, pursued from afar, alone and unknown, sang his heart’s music in the night, between waves and wild beasts. The *campesinos*, the men of the land, the creators, rose up in blind indignation against the disdainful city, their own creation. We wore epaulets and judge’s robes, in countries that came into the world wearing rope sandals and Indian headbands. The wise thing would have been to pair, with charitable hearts and the audacity of our founders, the Indian headband and the judicial robe, to undam the Indian, make a place for the able black, and tailor liberty to the bodies of those who rose up and triumphed in its name. What we had was the judge, the general, the man of letters, and the cleric. Our angelic youth, as if struggling from the arms of an octopus, cast their heads into the heavens and fell

back with sterile glory, crowned with clouds. The natural people, driven by instinct, blind with triumph, overwhelmed their gilded rulers. No Yankee or European book could furnish the key to the Hispanoamerican enigma. So the people tried hatred instead, and our countries amounted to less and less each year. Weary of useless hatred, of the struggle of book against sword, reason against the monk’s taper, city against countryside, the impossible empire of the quarreling urban castes against the tempestuous or inert natural nation, we are beginning, almost unknowingly, to try to love. The nations arise and salute one another. “What are we like?” they ask, and begin telling each other what they are like. When a problem arises in Cojimar they no longer seek the solution in Danzig. The frock-coats are still French, but the thinking begins to be American. The young men of America are rolling up their sleeves and plunging their hands into the dough, making it rise with the leavening of their sweat. They understand that there is too much imitation, and that salvation lies in creating. *Create* is this generation’s password. Make wine from plantains; it may be sour, but it is our wine! It is now understood that a country’s form of government must adapt to its natural elements, that absolute ideas, in order not to collapse over an error of form, must be expressed in relative forms; that liberty, in order to be viable, must be sincere and full, that if the republic does not open its arms to all and include all in its progress, it dies. The tiger inside came in through the gap, and so will the tiger outside. The general holds the cavalry’s speed to the pace of the infantry, for if he leaves the infantry far behind, the enemy will surround the cavalry. Politics is strategy. Nations must continually criticize themselves, for criticism is health, but with a single heart and a single mind. Lower yourselves to the unfortunate and raise them up in your arms! Let the heart’s fires unfreeze all that is motionless in America, and let the country’s natural blood surge and throb through its veins! Standing tall, the workmen’s eyes full of joy, the new men of America are saluting each other from one country to another. Natural statesmen are emerging from the direct study of nature; they read in order to apply what they read, not to copy it. Economists are studying problems at their origins.

⁹Bernardino Rivadavia was the first president of the Argentina; he was also one of the men who defended the colony of La Plata from British invasion in 1807.

¹⁰Agustín Iturbide was a military leader who initially fought in the Spanish forces against the Hidalgo insurrection, but he later joined the independence forces. This reference is to a conservative proclamation that Iturbide forced the Mexican Congress to adopt in 1822.

Orators are becoming more temperate. Dramatists are putting native characters onstage. Academies are discussing practical subjects. Poetry is snipping off its wild, Zorilla-esque¹¹ mane and hanging up its gaudy waistcoat on the glorious tree. Prose, polished and gleaming, is replete with ideas. The rulers of Indian republics are learning Indian languages.

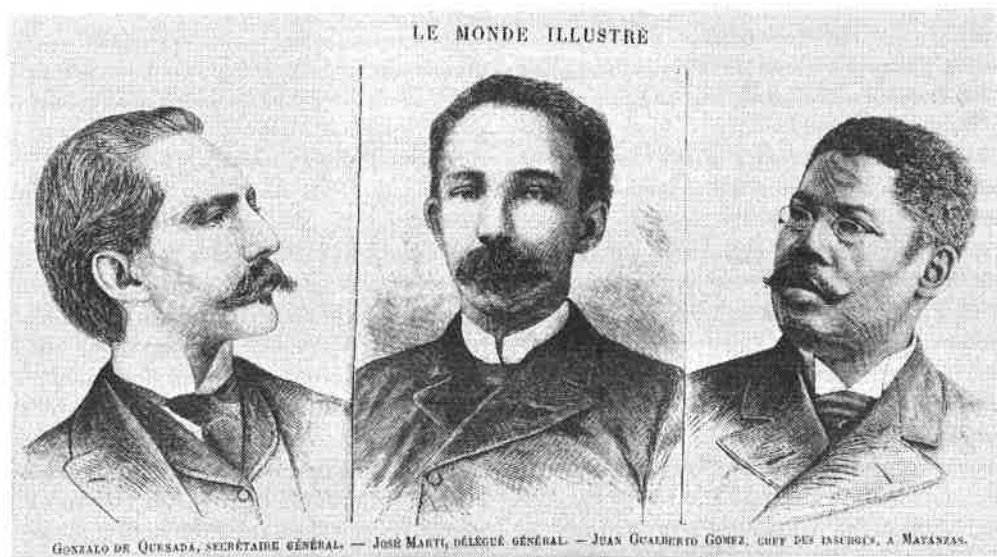
America is saving herself from all her dangers. Over some republics the octopus sleeps still, but by the law of equilibrium, other republics are running into the sea to recover the lost centuries with mad and sublime swiftness. Others, forgetting that Juárez¹² traveled in a coach drawn by mules, hitch their coach to the wind and take a soap bubble for a coachman—and poisonous luxury, enemy of liberty, corrupts the frivolous and opens the door to foreigners. The virile character of others is being perfected by the epic spirit of a threatened independence. And others, in rapacious wars against their neighbors, are nurturing an unruly soldier caste that may devour them. But our America may also face another danger, which comes not from within but from the different origins, methods, and interests of the continent’s two factions. The hour is near when she will be approached by an enterprising and forceful nation that will demand intimate relations with her, though it does not know her and disdains her. And virile nations self-made by the rifle and the law love other virile nations, and love only them. The hour of unbridled passion and ambition from which North America may escape by the ascendancy of the purest element in its blood—or into which its vengeful and sordid masses, its tradition of conquest, and the self-interest of a cunning leader could plunge it—is not yet so close, even to the most apprehensive eye, that there is no time for it to be confronted and averted by the manifestation of a discreet and unswerving pride, for its dignity, as a republic, in the eyes of watchful nations of the Universe, places upon North America a brake that our America must not remove by puerile provocation, ostentatious arrogance, or practical

discord. Therefore the urgent duty of our America is to show herself as she is, one soul and intent, rapidly overcoming the crushing weight of her past and stained only by the fertile blood shed by hands that do battle against ruins and by veins that were punctured by our former masters. The disdain of the formidable neighbor who does not know her is our America’s greatest danger, and it is urgent—for the day of the visit is near—that her neighbor come to know her, and quickly, so that he will not disdain her. But when he knows her, he will remove his hands from her in respect. One must have faith in the best in man and distrust the worst. One must give the best every opportunity, so that the worst will be laid bare and overcome. If not, the worst will prevail. Nations should have one special pillory for those who incite them to futile hatreds, and another for those who do not tell them the truth until it is too late.

There is no racial hatred because there are no races. Sickly, lamp-lit minds string together and rewarm the library-shelf races that the honest traveler and the cordial observer seek in vain in the justice of nature, where the universal identity of man leaps forth in victorious love and turbulent appetite. The soul, equal and eternal, emanates from bodies that are diverse in form and color. Anyone who promotes and disseminates opposition or hatred among races is committing a sin against humanity. But within that jumble of peoples which lives in close proximity to our peoples, certain peculiar and dynamic characteristics are condensed—ideas and habits of expansion, acquisition, vanity and greed—that could, in a period of internal disorder or precipitation of a people’s cumulative character, cease to be latent national preoccupations and become a serious threat to the neighboring, isolated and weak lands that the strong country declares to be perishable and inferior. To think is to serve. We must not, out of a villager’s antipathy, impute some lethal congenital wickedness to the continent’s light-skinned nation simply because it does not speak our language or share our view of what home life should be or resemble us in its political failings, which are different from ours, or because it does not think highly of quick-tempered, swarthy men or look with charity, from its still uncertain eminence, upon those less favored by history who, in heroic stages, are climbing the road that republics

¹¹Zorilla (1817–1893) was a Spanish poet, whom Martí did not admire.

¹²A famous classical *liberal* Benito Juárez was born a Zapotec Indian and served as president of Mexico from 1857–1863.



Cuban independence leaders Gonzalo de Quesada (1868–1915), José Martí (1853–95), and Juan Gualberto Gómez (1854–1933). The illustration is an engraving from *Le Monde Illustré*, 16th March 1895. How do these portraits reinforce points that Martí made in the excerpts in this chapter about the role of race in Cuban identity and nationalism? What do these portraits suggest about issues of class in the leadership of the independence movement?

Source: The photo of the image was provided from the Bridgeman Art Library International.

travel. But neither should we seek to conceal the obvious facts of the problem, which can, for the peace of the centuries, be resolved by timely study and the urgent, wordless union of the continental soul. For the unanimous hymn is already ringing forth, and the present generation is bearing industrious America along the road sanctioned by our sublime forefathers. From the Rio Bravo to the Straits of Magellan, the Great Cemi,¹³ seated on a condor's back, has scattered the seeds of the new America across the romantic nations of the continent and the suffering islands of the sea!

El Partido Liberal (Mexico City), January 20, 1891

"My Race"¹⁴

"Racist" is becoming a confusing word, and it must be clarified. NO man has any special rights because he belongs to one race or another: say "man" and all rights

have been stated. The black man, as a black man, is not inferior or superior to any other man; the white man who says "my race" is being redundant, and the black man who says "my race" is also redundant. Anything that divides men from each other, that separates them, that singles them out, or hems them in, is a sin against humanity. What sensible white man thinks he should be proud of being white, and what do blacks think of a white man who is proud of being white and believes he has special rights because he is? What must whites think of a black man who grows conceited about his color? To insist upon the racial divisions and racial differences of a people naturally divided is to obstruct both individual and public happiness, which lies in greater closeness among the elements that must live in common. It is true that in the black man there is no original sin or virus that makes him incapable of developing his whole soul as a man, and this truth must be spoken and demonstrated, because the injustice of

this world is great, as is the ignorance that passes for wisdom, and there are still those who believe in good faith that the black man is incapable of the intelligence and feelings of the white man. And what does it matter if this truth, this defense of nature, is called racism, because it is no more than natural respect, the voice that clamors from a man's bosom for the life and the peace of the nation. To state that the condition of slavery does not indicate any inferiority in the enslaved race—for white Gauls with blue eyes and golden hair were sold as slaves with letters around their necks in the markets of Rome—is good racism, because it is pure justice and helps the ignorant white shed his prejudices. But that is the limit of just racism, which is the right of the black man to maintain and demonstrate that his color does not deprive him of any of the capacities and rights of the human race.

And what right does the white racist, who believes his race has superior rights, have to complain of the black racist, who also believes that his race has special traits? What right does the black racist who sees a special character in his race have to complain of the white racist? The white man who, by reason of his race, believes himself superior to the black man acknowledges the idea of race and thus authorizes and provokes the black racist. The black man who trumpets his race—when what he is perhaps trumpeting instead is only the spiritual identity of all races—authorizes and provokes the white racist. Peace demands the shared rights of nature; differing rights go against nature and are the enemies of peace. The white who isolates himself isolates the Negro. The Negro who isolates himself drives the white to isolate himself.

In Cuba there is no fear whatsoever of a race war. "Man" means more than white, more than mulato, more than Negro. "Cuban" means more than white, more than mulato, more than Negro. On the battlefields, the souls of whites and blacks who died for Cuba have risen together through the air. In that daily life of defense, loyalty, brotherhood, and shrewdness, there was always a black man at the side of every white. Blacks, like whites, can be grouped according to their character—timid or brave, self-abnegating or egotistical—into the diverse parties of mankind. Political parties are aggregates of concerns, aspirations, interests, and characters. An

essential likeness is sought and found beyond all differences of detail, and what is fundamental in analogous characters merges in parties, even if their incidental characteristics or motives differ. In short, it is the similarity of character—a source of unity far superior to the internal relations of the varying colors of men—that commands and prevails in the formation of parties. An affinity of character is more powerful than an affinity of color. Blacks, distributed among the diverse or hostile specialties of the human spirit, will never want or be able to band together against whites, who are distributed among the same specialties. Blacks are too tired of slavery to enter voluntarily into the slavery of color. Men of pomp and self-interest, black and white, will be on one side, and generous and impartial men will be on the other. True men, black or white, will treat each other with loyalty and tenderness, taking pleasure in merit and pride in anyone, black or white, who honors the land where we were born. The word "racist" will be gone from the lips of the blacks who use it today in good faith, once they understand that that word is the only apparently valid argument—valid among sincere, apprehensive men—for denying the Negro the fullness of his rights as a man. The white racist and the Negro racist will be equally guilty of being racists. Many whites have already forgotten their color, and many blacks have, too. Together they work, black and white, for the cultivation of the mind, the dissemination of virtue, and the triumph of creative work and sublime charity.

There will never be a race war in Cuba. The Republic cannot retreat and the Republic, from the extraordinary day of the emancipation of blacks in Cuba and from its first independent constitution of April 10 in Guáimiro, never spoke of whites or blacks. The rights already conceded out of pure cunning by the Spanish government, and which have become habitual even before the Island's independence, can no longer be denied now, either by the Spaniard, who will maintain them as long as he draws breath in Cuba—in order to continue dividing Cuban blacks from Cuban whites—or by the independent nation, which will not, in liberty, be able to deny the rights that the Spaniard recognized in servitude.

¹³A spirit worshipped by the Taino peoples of the Caribbean.

¹⁴Source: From José Martí: *Selected Writings*, introduction by Roberto González Echevarría, edited by Esther Allen, translated by Esther

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As for the rest, each individual will be free within the sacred confines of his home. Merit, the clear and continual manifestation of culture and inexorable trade will end by uniting all men. There is much greatness in Cuba, in blacks and in whites.

April 16, 1893

Suggested Sources:

An excellent collection of José Martí's writings the collection from which these documents were taken: José Martí, *Selected Writings*, trans. Esther Allen (New York: Penguin Classics, 2002). Brazil was also a prominent location in which ideas about raceless nationalism developed. Those interested in these concepts should also consult some of Gilberto Freyre's famous works: *The Masters and the Slaves: A Study in the Development of Brazilian Civilization*, 2nd. English-language ed., trans. Samuel Putnam (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1970), and *New World in the Tropics: The Culture of Modern Brazil* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1959). Also see *The Mansions and the Shanties: The Making of Modern Brazil* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986 [1963]). Brazilian Novelist Jorge Amado

(1912–2001) wrestled with these same themes, most notably in his 1969 *Tent of Miracles*, trans. Barbara Shelby (New York: Knopf, 1971). Nelson Pereira dos Santos produced a film in 1978 titled "Tent of Miracles" based on Amado's reflections. One can also find similar claims about race and democracy in Mexico; see José Vasconcelos, *The Cosmic Race/La raza cósmica* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989).

Excellent secondary sources on Cuba include: Alejandro de la Fuente, "Myths of Racial Democracy: Cuba, 1900–1912," *Latin American Research Review*, Vol. 34, No. 3 (1999), pp. 39–73, and his book, *A Nation for All: Race, Inequality, and Politics in Twentieth-Century Cuba* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001). Also see Lillian Guerra, *The Myth of José Martí: Conflicting Nationalisms in Early Twentieth-Century Cuba* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005); and Ada Ferrer, *Insurgent Cuba: Race, Nation and Revolution, 1868–1898* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1999). For readers interested in the relationship between the United States and Cuba, see Louis A. Pérez, Jr., *On Becoming Cuban: Identity, Nationality, and Culture* (New York: The Ecco Press/Harper Collins, 1999).